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fetching a full object;
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determining whether a first attribute in the fetched full object is a full attribute or a skeleton attribute in accordance with the fetched full object's skeleton definition;

storing the corresponding skeleton object in the skeleton cache.

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    determining whether the second object resides in the
20 skeleton cache as a full object or as a skeleton object.

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6. The method of claim 4 further comprising:  
30 in response to a determination that the second object  
resides in the skeleton cache as a skeleton object,  
determining whether the second attribute in the second  
object is a full attribute or a skeleton attribute.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

in response to a determination that the second attribute is a full attribute, retrieving the requested value of the second attribute of the second object from the second object residing in the skeleton cache.

8. The method of claim 6 further comprising:

in response to a determination that the second attribute is a skeleton attribute, retrieving the requested value of the second attribute of the second object from a corresponding full object for the second object stored within the data processing system.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

determining whether to create a skeleton cache in accordance with a skeleton policy, wherein the skeleton policy comprises one or more configurable conditions for determining whether to create a skeleton cache.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein a configurable condition is based upon an identity of a user of the data processing system.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of membership of a user of the data processing system within a class of users.

12. The method of claim 9 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of membership of a device for storing the skeleton cache within a class of devices.

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13. The method of claim 9 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of available memory.

14. The method of claim 9 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of available memory within a device that stores the skeleton cache.

15. The method of claim 9 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of available network bandwidth.

16. The method of claim 9 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a temporal evaluation of historical updates of objects stored within the data processing system.

17. The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
providing a database access interface component between a data requester and a database; and  
embedding a skeleton handler within the database access interface component, wherein a skeleton handler performs operations on the skeleton cache on behalf of the database interface component.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising:  
configuring a skeleton policy for the database access interface component, wherein the skeleton policy comprises one or more configurable conditions for determining whether to create a skeleton cache.

19. An apparatus for managing objects in a data processing system, the apparatus comprising:

means for creating a skeleton cache; and

means for storing a first object in the skeleton cache,

5 wherein a skeleton cache stores skeleton objects and/or full objects, wherein a full object is an object in which each attribute within the full object has a data value, wherein a skeleton object is an object in which at least one attribute within the skeleton object is dataless, and wherein a  
10 skeleton object has a corresponding full object that is stored without the skeleton cache but within the data processing system.

20. The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising:

15 means for retrieving a skeleton definition associated with the first object, wherein a skeleton definition is associated with an first object's type, wherein a skeleton definition indicates whether an attribute within the first object is a skeleton attribute, and wherein a skeleton  
20 attribute is a dataless attribute.

21. The apparatus of claim 20 further comprising:

means for fetching a full object;

25 means for generating a skeleton object corresponding to the fetched full object;

means for determining whether a first attribute in the fetched full object is a full attribute or a skeleton attribute in accordance with the fetched full object's skeleton definition;

30 means for copying the first attribute's data value from the fetched full object into the corresponding skeleton object in response to a determination that the first attribute is a full attribute; and

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22. The apparatus of claim 20 further comprising:  
5 means for requesting a value of a second attribute of a second object; and  
means for determining whether the second object resides in the skeleton cache as a full object or as a skeleton object.

10 23. The apparatus of claim 22 further comprising:  
means for retrieving the requested value of the second attribute of the second object from the second object residing in the skeleton cache in response to a  
15 determination that the second object resides in the skeleton cache as a full object.

24. The apparatus of claim 22 further comprising:  
means for determining whether the second attribute in  
20 the second object is a full attribute or a skeleton attribute in response to a determination that the second object resides in the skeleton cache as a skeleton object.

25. The apparatus of claim 24 further comprising:  
25 means for retrieving the requested value of the second attribute of the second object from the second object residing in the skeleton cache in response to a determination that the second attribute is a full attribute.

means for retrieving the requested value of the second attribute of the second object from a corresponding full object for the second object stored within the data

means for determining whether to create a skeleton cache in accordance with a skeleton policy, wherein the skeleton policy comprises one or more configurable conditions for determining whether to create a skeleton cache.

29. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of membership of a user of the data processing system within a class of users.

31. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of available memory.

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32. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of available memory within a device that stores the skeleton cache.

33. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a determination of available network bandwidth.

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34. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein a configurable condition is based upon a temporal evaluation of historical updates of objects stored within the data processing system.

10 35. The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising:

means for providing a database access interface component between a data requester and a database; and

15 means for embedding a skeleton handler within the database access interface component, wherein a skeleton handler performs operations on the skeleton cache on behalf of the database interface component.

36. The apparatus of claim 35 further comprising:

20 means for configuring a skeleton policy for the database access interface component, wherein the skeleton policy comprises one or more configurable conditions for determining whether to create a skeleton cache.

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37. A computer program product on a computer readable medium for managing objects in a data processing system, the computer program product comprising:

- instructions for creating a skeleton cache; and
- 5 instructions for storing a first object in the skeleton cache, wherein a skeleton cache stores skeleton objects and/or full objects, wherein a full object is an object in which each attribute within the full object has a data value, wherein a skeleton object is an object in which at
- 10 least one attribute within the skeleton object is dataless, and wherein a skeleton object has a corresponding full object that is stored without the skeleton cache but within the data processing system.

- 15 38. The computer program product of claim 37 further comprising:

- instructions for retrieving a skeleton definition associated with the first object, wherein a skeleton definition is associated with an first object's type,
- 20 wherein a skeleton definition indicates whether an attribute within the first object is a skeleton attribute, and wherein a skeleton attribute is a dataless attribute.

- 25 39. The computer program product of claim 38 further comprising:

- instructions for fetching a full object;
- instructions for generating a skeleton object corresponding to the fetched full object;
- 30 instructions for determining whether a first attribute in the fetched full object is a full attribute or a skeleton attribute in accordance with the fetched full object's skeleton definition;

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5       instructions for storing the corresponding skeleton  
object in the skeleton cache.

10        instructions for determining whether to create a  
skeleton cache in accordance with a skeleton policy, wherein  
the skeleton policy comprises one or more configurable  
conditions for determining whether to create a skeleton  
cache.

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